

THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S HOUSE

John 2:12-16

Introduction: The Passover Feast was a big thing to the Jew and every Jewish man wanted to attend a Passover Feast at least once in his lifetime. Also it was a law that if one lived within 20 miles he had to attend. The sacrificial animals were raised by the locals and the Temple and were bought by travelers who came in for the Feast. The only money accepted in the Temple was Temple coins or Galilean money so money had to be exchanged and there was a very high fee plus a fee to inspect non raised Temple animals to be offered for sacrifice. The market where animals were available was run by the Temple as most of the local animals didn't pass the inspection. There was an overcharge on money exchange, animals sold and on any fees charged. This was the custom of the Temple in the days of Jesus and He didn't like it at all.

I. WHAT MADE JESUS ANGRY?

1. Worship Without Reverence

- Instinct causes even an unbeliever to remove his hat, to whisper, to be polite, to walk gently, to keep his/her eyes lowered.
- Without reverence, the most "dignified" prayer is no more than reading a page from the newspaper.
- Without realizing the Holiness of God, the attitude of many is that God is the "guy in the sky."
- Unprepared to worship, where the mind is far, far away, not even there in God's House.
- Using God's House for other purposes than worship. Just what was the original purpose of THIS building? Was it dedicated as a House of Worship?

2. Worship Had Lost it's Meaning

- The emphasis was no longer on WHY the sacrifice, but on the ACT of the sacrifice.
- The LETTER of the Laws of sacrificing replaced the SPIRIT of the Laws.
- Today the emphasis is often upon the stained glass, the organ/piano, the pews, the choir robes, the heating/cooling, the talents of the choir, the church staff, programs, trips, etc..
- Aids to worship become OBJECTS of worship and worship is no longer for/to God.

3. No Place To Worship

- The Temple was intended to be the place to worship God where all nations would be able to pray to God.
- The Courtyard for Gentiles was the only place Gentiles were allowed to "worship" but it had been turned into the business area of the Temple.
- There were some who came to worship who were actually shut out, not allowed in.
- Is there anything HERE that would hinder a person finding God?
 - Is there snobbishness? Exclusiveness? Coldness? Arrogance? Lack of Welcome?

4. Sad, But True, So Often (Not original with me, copied.. "Monday Morning Letter" by Mel Johnson)

A high school girl wrote the following dated "Monday morning", to a friend:

"I attended your church yesterday. Although you had invited me only once, I felt that you were sincere in wanting me to come. I came alone. I looked for you, hoping to sit beside you, but you were not there.

As a stranger, I wanted to sit near the back of the church, but I couldn't. Those rows were already packed. An usher had to lead me right up to the front. I felt as if I were on parade.

The congregation sang hymns that I didn't know. I tried to mumble along and pretend that I was singing, but I had never heard those hymns before. I must confess that I was surprised to note that some of the church people weren't singing. Between their sighs and yawns they just stared into space. Three of the kids that I had respected on campus were whispering to one another. Another girl was giggling. I really did not expect that in your church.

The pastor's sermon was interesting, although some members of the choir didn't seem to think so. They looked bored and restless. One kept smiling at someone in the congregation. The pastor spoke about the reality of faith. The message got to me and I made up my mind to speak to someone about it after the service, but utter chaos reigned after the benediction.

I said "Good Morning" to one couple but their greeting was less than cordial. I looked for some teens with whom I could discuss the sermon, but they were huddled in a corner talking about the newest records. One girl looked my way but just waved.

My parents don't go to church. I came alone yesterday hoping to find a friendly congregation in which they wouldn't feel too out of place.

But as I left, I wasn't too impressed with the sign outside that read: "The friendly church with the warm welcome."

I'm sorry, but I won't be back."

CONCLUSION:

1. Could that letter have been written about THIS/OUR Church?
2. God's House is no place for the worldly! God's House is a House of Worship, A House of Prayer.
3. What would Jesus think of what is called "worship" today in most Churches? What about this one?
4. Ask yourself, "What is the purpose of this place where I am right now? Is that purpose happening?"